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Food is served

on china platters and/or round plates. If necessary, everyone is provided with knives, forks, and spoons, but napkins are not ordinarily used. Cups and demitasses are provided for tea and coffee, respectively. (The only kind of coffee which is consumed in the village is "Turkish" coffee.) Wine is drunk from small glasses. The only acceptable way to drink water, however, is directly from the spouted jug called *ibriiq*. This is definitely an acquired skill which children are taught as early as possible. For this purpose, a small *ibriiq*, usually made of glass, is provided. With the exception of the coffee grinder, usually the coffee beakers, the pestle and mortar, and the *ibriiq*, all these items are of European manufacture and/or design.

Although kerosene heaters are readily available in Beirut, the standard means of heating houses in the village is by small, round, charcoal braziers which sit low on the floor. If a social group in one room of a multi-room house moves to another, the brazier around which the group has sat will be picked up and carried along. The idea, in other words, is to keep the people warm rather than to heat the room. The European and American kerosene heaters are undoubtedly more efficient, but they are a great deal more expensive to buy and operate. Besides, the charcoal braziers can also be used for boiling coffee and broiling meat on skewers.

Oil lamps, with glass chimneys, of European manufacture and of the same type which is still sometimes seen in rural areas of the United States, are used in many houses. Everyone keeps a supply of candles in case of emergency. But the most widely used type of illumination is provided by a kerosene pressure lantern. This gives a very strong light and is frequently suspended on an iron rod from the ceiling of the room.

Nearly every individual who is adolescent or older has a flashlight and uses it. On moonless or cloudy nights, the village is enveloped in pitch blackness, with only a few undiffused lights showing here and there from doors or windows.

Floor-covering is provided either by small "oriental" rugs or straw mats. Such ornamental or luxury items as elaborately inlaid boxes and furniture, engraved brass or copper trays, and painted pottery, are rare.

DIET

The villagers regularly eat three meals a day, of which the evening meal is ordinarily the largest, except on Sundays. Breakfast is likely to include the left-overs from the preceding evening meal. Bread is eaten at, and coffee served after, every meal. Lunch tends to be small, and the family is apt to be incomplete at lunch, for men or boys working in the fields usually take their lunches with them—a couple of loaves of bread, some olives, and perhaps an onion or cucumber or two, and a jug of water.

The villagers say that in summer they have more to eat than in winter. In effect, what they mean is that fresh fruits and vegetables supplement the year-

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262 257 *Sweet Preserves.* Figs and apricots (which are also eaten raw in season) are made into very sweet jams which are eaten throughout the year. Grapes (extensively eaten raw in season) and carob pods are made into another type of preserve, called *dibs,* which has the consistency of molasses.

A preserve of a rather special type, *ḥalaawi,* ("sweet"), is obtained from the city in returnable cans. It comes in a hard cake which flakes when cut. Its essential ingredients are sugar and *ṭiḥiini* (mashed sesame seeds). *Ḥalaawi* is very sweet and "rich," and is considered to be a great delicacy which is eaten, alone or with bread, at the close of the meal.

262 252 *Milk products.* Milk is not usually taken raw, although there is one dish, *laban ʾimmu,* which consists of hot milk in which float pastry balls which are stuffed with rice and/or meat. Rather, milk is preferred in three fermented forms: white cheese (from goat's milk), *laban* ("sour" milk, known in America as "yoghurt"), and *labni* (drained *laban,* which has the consistency of cream cheese). Of the three, *laban* is the most extensively used. It appears at every meal and is the preferred sauce with which to eat cooked *kibbi.*

Eggs are sometimes eaten hard boiled, but they are preferred when included in a dish which is a combination of omelette and meat loaf. Potatoes and turnips, also, are usually included in a larger combination. "French fried" potatoes are known, but not by that name.

Onions and garlic are eaten cooked or raw, alone or in combination with other things: Rice is used for stuffing or is served as a dish, boiled, and covered with onions.

272 263 Tea (*shayy*) is taken very sweet, but milk is never added. As with coffee, the sugar is boiled along with the main ingredient. The common occidental notion, however, that "Turkish" coffee (*qahwi*) really isn't Turkish coffee unless it is sirupy sweet is not necessarily founded on fact. Some prefer it with little sugar or none at all, and the guest is usually asked if he prefers it very sweet, sweet, or bitter. The only requirements are that it be thick and very hot.

262 252 Of the summer products which have not been considered so far, squash is the only one which appears in cooked form, frequently stuffed with rice and/or meat (*kuusa maḥshi*). (There is a general notion that cool foods are preferable in hot weather, hot foods in cold weather, but this is not rigidly followed in practice.)

Sliced cucumbers and tomatoes, in olive oil, are served in summer, but these, and other vegetables, are preferred when included in two larger dishes. One of these is a very delicious salad (*ṣalaṭa*) consisting of lettuce, tomato, cucumber, parsley, mint, onion, and garlic. The dressing is a mixture of lemon juice and olive oil. The other is *tabbuuli.* This has nearly the same ingredients as the salad, but they are chopped up very fine and mixed with cracked wheat which has been soaked in water. Like raw *kibbi, tabbuuli* is served in the form of a mound, and its eating is associated with the drinking of *ʿaraq.*

Legumes are not too commonly eaten alone without further preparation than